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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the place of morals and values in the early school in the North West Territories (1885-1905), and in Alberta and Saskatchewan (1905-1945). The purpose is to determine whether values and morals have always been a part of the goals and/or curricula of the Canadian public schools. Department of education annual reports, curriculum guides, inspectors' reports, teacher requirements, examinations, and textbooks are examined to determine the school's attitude toward morals. The results of the study indicate that all aspects of the school in the early years equated the school and a moral outlook; that all aspects of the early school agreed on the meaning of moral education; that the subject was not well taught; that as the century progressed the school became less and less interested in moral education; and that the skills and abilities today deemed necessary for a morally educated person to operate were not developed. It is concluded that the influence for moral education in the early schools was a direct result of the Superintendent of Schools in the North West Territories, who took over the direction of the system when the dual, church controlled schools were replaced by public schools. (Author/JK)

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TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE GUIDELINES: MORAL EDUCATION FROM AN HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW - THE ALBERTA CONTEXT

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TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE GUIDELINES: MORAL EDUCATION FROM AN HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW

There is much debate in education today. The back to the basics movement is one such debate. It creates headlines, upsets professionals, spurs provincial officials to make formidable pronouncements - but noone is sure what anyone else means by 'back to the basics'. Is it a concentration on the three r's? Is it a heavy-handed, physical discipline? Is it a stress on moral or character education? This last possibility causes further debate - should the school teach values, what kind of values should it teach, how should it teach them. There is an Association for Values Education and Research. This afternoon there is a panel on moral education in the 70's. Educators everywhere talk about 'value clarification'. There is an approach to social studies in Alberta which is value oriented (the teacher should not impose his values, but accept the values of his student - even if he doesn't agree with them).

The Worth Report - A Choice of Futures - Alberta's educational commission for the 70's has ethical discretion as a goal of the school - "to nurture the development of personal values and a social conscience: a life of ethical and moral action is also the key to experiencing personal fulfillment."[1] The report indicates that the teacher must show the student that moral issues are important. In Ontario lip service has been/is being paid to Kohlberg's six steps toward moral maturity. The Mackay Report suggested that the development of a moral conscience should be actively pursued by the classroom teacher whenever the opportunity arose.[2] The Cameron Commission - Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta, 1959 says "the public school system must respect and support, and even reinforce the basic intellectual, social, moral and

spiritual values of society. The school does not set these values - they are set by society."[3] Reports, commissions on education in other provinces, indicate the same interest in value and moral education as goals of the school. As the Cameron report noted these goals are set not by the school, but by society. Because they are so set, and because society is so diverse we get a great deal of debate on the school's role in the area of value education.

Is this interest and debate new? Have values and morals always been a part of the goals and/or curricula of the school? To try and answer this, this paper looks at the place of morals and values in the early school in the North West Territories, 1885-1905, and Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1905-1945. It contends that there was no such debate in the early years of the school. All parties agreed on the role of the school in this area: department of education annual reports were explicit; curriculum guides delineated how this goal was to be achieved; inspectors' reports tended to accuse the school, that is, the teacher, of being unsuccessful in this area; hiring practises (and firing) for teachers had morality guidelines; textbooks, particularly readers, were published with the content expressly promoting this aim; and departmental examinations questioned a moral or value based knowledge.

A look at each of these areas over the years should help document the school's attitude toward morals. Specifically, the paper is asking the following questions:

1. did the early school have a moral aim and what was meant by this?
2. did all aspects of the school - teachers, curriculum guides, textbooks etc. agree on the meaning of moral education?
3. how was it handled in the school?

4. did the emphasis on morals and values remain constant over the years?

5. was the emphasis on a development through habit only, or was a rational program included?

Hopefully, the answer to these questions will help to shed some light on the current debate over value education and clarification in the schools. Let us turn now to the six categories under study.

1. Department of Education Annual Reports

David Goggin, the first Superintendent of schools for the North West Territories had two goals or aims for the school. "To teach the children to earn a respectable living and to live a worthy life" he considered the prime functions of the school. He believed that it was "not the quantity, but the quality of its manhood that determines the status of a nation." This, according to Goggin, could be measured by "educated men with refined tastes, sound moral perception, a keen sense of civic responsibility and duty."[4] He was very proud of the statement that "the North West Territories stands foremost among the colonies which insist on direct ethical teaching as a part of the program."[5]

Alberta and Saskatchewan continued the emphasis on morals that Goggin had begun in the Territories. The 1906 Annual Report for Alberta stated that it was the duty of the teacher "to turn the attention of the pupils to the moral quality of their acts and to lead them into a clear understanding and constant practice of every virtue."[6] According to the report every pupil was to be punctual, clean, tidy, diligent, kind, courteous, obedient, and disciplined. The school was to act as a kind, firm judicious parent.

By 1912 manners and morals were no longer separate subjects in either Alberta or Saskatchewan. However the development of moral judgment,

good character, and social manners were very important. Time and again the annual reports referred to the development of character, moral growth, external forms of conduct, proper behavior etc. For example, in 1919 the deputy minister stressed that "intellectual, moral, and physical development of the children in this province must be considered of .... fundamental and primary importance."[7] An important function of the school in 1922 was to help the child develop sound morality and good character. Gradually, however, the annual reports make less and less mention of this subject. In 1936 the report stated:

> "The school is responsible for the students' physical, social and intellectual development, as well as for vocational education; but the chief purpose of education is the building of moral stature . . . Direct instruction must seek and instill self-control, self-reliance, reliability, honesty, fair-play, co-operativeness, cleanmindedness, kindliness, loyalty, considerateness and truthfulness."[8]

Except for a few isolated instances as this, morals and values did not receive much attention in the reports in the late 20's and the 30's.

So we find that as the years progressed the annual reports mentioned morals, manners, and development of character less and less. By the 1940's the reports concentrated on statistics, the organization of the large unit, and the development of progressive education. Social and democratic development received a great deal of attention, at the expense of morals and values and ethics and character development.

2. Curriculum Guides

The curriculum guides of the early school stress the advantage of using the whole course of study as well as individual subjects to teach morals. In 1888 the Protestant section of the Board of Education for the North West Territories stated: "Besides using the time for moral training definitely set apart in the program the teacher is expected to take

advantage of such occasions as arise during the whole course of study for the inculcation of these matters."[9] It suggested that in Standard I "conversations on the duty of believing in, fearing, and loving God, cleanliness, and neatness, honesty, truthfulness and obedience" should be given. Standard II, continuing the nature of morality in Standard I should add the avoidance of impure and profane language. By Standard III "respect to persons in authority, courteous and modest behavior, how to be useful and honourable, lessons on temperance" should be offered. In Standard IV virtues such as "reverence for all sacred things, integrity, manliness, unselfishness, self-control, forgiveness of injuries, thrift, perseverance" were to be developed. The culmination of character development took place in Standard V where the potential graduate learned "self-denial, self-respect; proper behavior to the opposite sex, avoidance of bad habits and the cultivation of a cheerful disposition."[10]

Throughout the territorial phase in the West the subjects of history and literature were prominent in moral and character development. The 1896 curriculum guides for literature advised that "a short stanza selected for its ethical, patriotic, aesthetic or other value is memorized."[11] In Standards II and III character studies were introduced and the pupils were led gradually to look on literature as an interpreter of life, as an effective agency for cherishing within the ideal.[12] The history guides for the same period indicated that

> "history, in recording men's deeds, sets forth their relations to each other and to the state. The relations of men to each other give rise to morals. Accordingly one use of history is to form moral notions in children, another to teach patriotism and civic duty."[13]

In Standards II and III the guide suggested that "the lives of a small number of leading Canadians and Englishmen are described by the teacher

and the children are led to consider these public acts and are guided in forming such judgments on the morality of these acts."[14]

Both temperance and manners and morals were subjects of the curriculum during the territory years and the first few years of the provincial departments of education. The temperance guide is indicative of the moral tone of the territorial years: "Love of the good is a higher motive and action than fear of the bad."[15] The virtues of self-reverence and self control were important and the stress was on a trained will guided by an enlightened conscience.

The manners and morals program informed the teacher that he should "see that the pupil practices those external forms of conduct which express a true sense of the proprieties of life and that politeness which denotes a genuine respect for the wants and wishes of others." The stress on manners and morals together appeared to be a belief that graceful behavior should have, as its basis, good moral character since "manners are not idle but the fruit of loyal nature and of noble mind." The curriculum guide felt that the influence of the school here was far reaching.

> "Beginning work punctually, doing a given amount of work within a stated period, working silently so as not to hinder his neighbor, cooperating with associates in common tasks or amusements, and obeying promptly the law of the school, make up a daily discipline, the future value of which, can scarcely be overestimated."[16]

The 1907 Programme of Studies for Alberta stated that "selections of poetry and prose inculcating reverence ... and admiration of moral courage are to be committed to memory"; that a training of the moral judgment, and preparation for intelligenc citizenship are important aims in teaching history; that in Standard II "lives of distinguished men are described .... discussions of the chief excellence and defects in their

character to teach moral discriminations and ultimately to derive principles of conduct; that "it is the duty of the teacher to see that the pupil practises those external forms of conduct" which society expected.[17]

According to G.J. Langley the omission of Manners and Morals as a separate subject in 1907 in Saskatchewan marked a turning point in educational philosophy. No longer was the teaching of subject matter an end in itself, but the medium through which the mental, moral growth and character development of the child was to be furthered. Far from losing its place in the curriculum, the aims of the Manners and Morals course permeated the whole curriculum. History, Literature, Hygiene, Physical Education in particular were of importance.[18] Alberta in 1912 following the recommendations of a review committee also deleted manners and morals as a separate subject. By 1922 conscious curriculum making implied the intentional selection of materials and activities which together would result in desirable changes in behavior and the development of wholesome attitudes and ideals. The Handbook for 1936 suggested "the new curriculum must be made to contribute its full share to the development of character, right attitudes and good citizenship in Alberta youth."[19]

By 1942, the Programme of Studies for the Elementary School was stating that

> "the proper adjustment of the personality of the school child is another of our educational objectives. The school has a twofold function - it holds before him the attitudes, standards, principles which have society's approval, and provides a supervised social situation in which these behavior tendencies can be realized and undesirable patterns inhibited."[20]

The curriculum guide indicated that in the past the emphasis has been upon intellectual, utilitarian, and objectively measured results. But by the 1940's the school was to provide exercises for emotional responses

as well as for intellectual capacities" .... the activity program (Enterprise) thus offers a solution for the old problem of 'character education' concerning which the traditional curriculum accomplished very little."[21] The 1942 Program continued

> "education must cease to be a narrowly intellectual process whose sole concern is the acquisition of subject matter and skills, and enlarge its objective to include those aspects of child development which are at least as important in development of worthwhile citizens, the emotional, the social, and the volitional sides of his nature."[22]

Curriculum guides indicate an emphasis on the development of character in the individual. The earlier years appear to give much more emphasis to this ethical or moral growth than do the guides of the later years. Both the overall course of study, plus individual subjects were directly related to moral development. As the century progressed the stress on individual subjects was dropped and moral understanding was to pervade the whole curriculum. By the forties with the progressive movement swing to integrated subject matter and teaching the whole child, the curriculum makers felt they had the answer to the successful development and teaching of character education.

3. Inspectors' Reports

Reports of Inspectors mention moral development, and character education. Most of the comments by inspectors on this matter back up the 1942 Programme of Studies, Grades I to VI contention that character education had been poorly taught in the traditional curriculum. In 1906 Inspector Ross lamented that "the teaching of hygiene, manners and morals is neglected in most of our schools. This is a serious mistake as the embryo citizen should recieve training during his impressionable years in his duties toward society."[23] In that same year Inspector Thibaudeau

said: "It is not what a man has but what he is that makes him a desirable, worthy citizen."[24] Inspector Hartley in 1911 was concerned about the quality of teaching found in reading, literature, English. He noted: "The study of the selections as literature is neglected, and their ethical and aesthetic value not utilized."[25] 1912 finds Inspector Thibaudeau asking, "We talk a great deal at conventions and read in school journals of 'developing character and training for good citizenship' but what character are we developing?"[26] In 1915 Inspector Ross, who earlier had lamented the neglect in this area, suggested a possible solution:

> "The first duty of the school is to develop character in the boys and girls. . . Manly spirit, if properly controlled, will be one of the most potent factors in character building in connection with our school system. But it must be under the direction of a capable teacher who will be an example of true manhood."[27]

1915, an Inspector Smith suggested that "more importance should be placed on teaching pupils how to study and in developing good habits of work and thought."[28] Inspector Hicks was worried about history. It was his belief that one of the principal aims of teaching history was "to develop within the boy or girl an ability to discern moral truths and to make generalizations concerning cause and effect."[29] Hicks felt that careful preparations and actual teaching were necessary if this principal value of history was not to be lost to the pupil. He concluded that "the majority of teachers in rural schools are lacking in ability to teach history."[30] In his 1917 report he was concerned about the supervision of children's play. Hicks suggested to the Department that it should emphasize to the teacher the importance of supervising playtime activities. "By these means", Hicks concluded, "a very valuable aid towards the health, happiness, and moral welfare of the boys and girls would be secured."[31] It seems that by 1920

some of this advice was heeded. Inspector Smith was pleased to find more interest taken in the social development of the student. He thought that

> "the majority of principals realize that those who have the responsibility of organizing and managing a modern high school are compelled to accept the administration of the social activities among students as a legitimate and regular function of the office, and one full of possibilities for education and character making."[32]

Inspector Thibaudeau was also hopeful. ... Teachers continue to pay more attention to the children during recess and noon periods, and evince greater interest in their physical and moral development."[33] After 1920 the Inspector's Reports became more concerned with organizational and financial matters and curriculum concerns were not mentioned. Rather than the content, aims and quality of the subject matter the inspectors were occupied with methodology, discipline, and the certification of the teacher. The Inspectors' Reports, like the other two avenues we've explored spent progressively less and less time devoted to matters of character building and moral education as the century progressed.

4. Teacher Requirements

The 1890-91 Board of Education requirements for the Territories "required that every teacher should present a certificate of good moral character"[34] and considered that the character of a teacher, along with incidental effort, was the best means wherewith to teach ethics. The 1894 School Laws stated

> "Teachers are required to enforce by precept and example, habits of punctuality, neatness, cleanliness, and order; to observe and impress upon the pupils the principles and morals of the Christian religion, especially those of truth, honesty, piety and humanity; and the duty of respect and obedience to parents and to all persons placed in authority over them."[35]

Entrance requirements to both the Winnipeg and Regina Normal Schools included a certificate of moral character signed by a clergyman. To

receive a Second Class Certificate from Regina in 1895 the prospective teacher needed to be aware of the "nature and aims of education, teaching and instruction, psychology and ethics as the scientific basis of the art of education, and their application to the development of intellectual and moral powers."[36] In 1906 at the Calgary Normal School not only did teachers - in - training have to submit to rules regarding attendance, classification and examiniation, but also to rules regarding conduct and "they shall lodge and board at such houses as are approved by the principal."[37] Age, moral character and academic standing continued to be admission requirements in Alberta Normal Schools through 1927-28. Beginning in 1929, no further mention was made of moral character references. Teachers, however, found themselves bound by all kinds of moral regulations once they found a position. Jean Burnet in Next Year Country said that "it is common knowledge that teachers in early Western Canada had a puritan code of ethics thrust upon them as the price of employment."[38] John Chalmers in Teachers of the Foothills Province indicates that teachers were fired for a variety of 'moral' reasons e.g. smoking; staying out too late; not attending church; keeping company with a member of the opposite sex.[39] In 1942 one young women teacher said that she would be criticized severely if she entertained men friends in the teacherage.[40] As in the other areas teachers also were confronted more often and more openly in the early years of schooling with a moral or standard of practice and behavior.

5. Examinations

The moral or value emphasis in schooling is also found in old examination papers. The grammar paper for 1907 uses the sentence "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in."[49] A literature exam for Standard V for the same year asked the students to explain

Jewels are baubles; 'tis a sin
To care for such unfruitful things."[50]

This same exam also wanted to know "the ethical lesson" of a certain poem. The Standard VIII literature exam of 1906 talks about ethical purpose and delineation of character. One specific question was to write a paragraph on the 'moral tone' of "The Tempest."[51] In 1910 the concept of right and wrong and the idea of the punishment fitting the crime were evident. A history exam in 1911 wanted the writers "to point out the excellences and defects of the Greek character."[53] 1913 talked of 'value choices'.

After this date the number of examinations which have survived is limited. However, a 1926 exam shows a concentration on factual material. A 1930 Province of Saskatchewan grade nine history exam asked the writer to give a short account of; to briefly describe; to complete partial statements; to select the 'true' answer.[53] No mention of moral reasons or ethical decisions or development of an historical character. A 1935 Literature and Spelling exam for Grade VIII used phrases such as : describe, explain, write from memory, state, account for, answer, express.[54] Gone from the exams were the earlier attention to ethical purpose, value choices, moral tone and concepts of right and wrong, good and bad.

The examination papers appeared to follow the same trend mentioned earlier - heavy use of moral phrases and indicators in the early years, and a definite lack of such as the province and schools developed.

6. Textbooks

The role of the textbook in setting a moral tone for the early school was an important one. The authorized textbook was the medium through which the curriculum was made available to the child. Because other resource materials were lacking, because educational theories of the time period dictated, and because highly trained teachers were scarce

the textbook took on an august importance. It was the one, undisputed authority the child and teacher could rely on. The high school grades had a prescribed text for each subject and the departmental examinations were based on the material found in the text. In contrast, the early elementary school relied mainly on the reader. It introduced the child, not only to the English language but also to history, geography, nature study and science.

The content of the readers, in particular, stressed a moral view of the world - to accept misfortune, to be thankful for God's blessings, to follow a life based on the golden rule and Judaeo - Christian traditions. The virtues of persistence, obedience, truthfulness and courage were particularly prominent. On the other hand idleness and laziness were very sinful. In "The Sentinel's Pouch" the child learned that if you followed order you were doing your duty and would be rewarded. "Pass that Puck" taught that pride and selfishness were not winning characteristics. "The Rich Man and the Cobbler" suggested that rich people were sad and poor people happy. The early readers seemed to include a top - heavy number of selections which taught a moral.[55]

Another feature of the early reader in use in the West was one and two line fillers, usually found at the end of longer selections. Almost all of these stressed a moral. e.g.

"A good action is never thrown away."

"A kind face is a beautiful face."

"All that's great and good is done just by patient trying."

"The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings."

"Big things are done by little things."

As the school grew and adapted to the growing population in the West the textbooks changed in appearance, in content, in importance. Spurred on by a maturing population and by the progressive education movement, textbooks, particularly the readers changed. The number of selections depicting a moral decreased and the one and two line fillers with their proverbial touch became extinct. At the same time the dominance, the importance of the reader in the learning process lessened. It became one of many resources available to the teacher and the student.

Like the five other areas we've examined, that of textbooks reflecting and teaching a moral spirit or the development of character, underwent a decrease in emphasis. So that by the 1940's the moral emphasis in the readers; the use of the reader to teach character education was no longer as viable as it had been. Like the annual reports, the reports of inspectors, teacher requirements and examinations, the textbook also seemed to neglect this whole area of morals, values, character education.

What does this tell us?

First, that all aspects of the school in the early years - annual reports, curriculum guides, teacher requirements, comments of inspectors, examination questions and textbooks - equated the school and a moral outlook. The role of the school was to teach a certain kind of behavior to all the pupils, and this behavior was very much associated with the behavior of a good christian.

Second, that all aspects of the early school agreed on the meaning of moral education. Character training, knowledge of good manners, virtues such as honesty, courage, persistence, faithfulness, hard work etc. were the kinds of values found in the early school. The values to be taught were absolute truths - a pattern of behavior, a way of living that didn't change.

Third, that despite the emphasis on morals in the aims, and despite the agreement by all aspects of the school in this area the subject was not well taught. It was not an examination subject (at a time when examination subjects were very important); there was no textbook available from which to derive principles and produce examples; there was no time slot set aside in the time-table for character education (except in the early years of the N.W.T.); and inspectors noted that this areas was neglected. Fourth, that as the century progressed the school became less and less interested in moral or character education. It was dropped as a separate subject, teacher requirements no longer mentioned moral characteristics, examinations changed in character as did the textbooks. The emphasis of the early years disappeared.

Fifth, that the skills and abilities today deemed necessary for a morally educated person to operate were not developed. William Bruneau suggests that three components are required to make a moral decision: (1) to take into account the interests and feelings of others; (2) to anticipate the consequences of one's acts; (3) to formulate reasonable moral principles which relate to one's own and others' interests and (4) to translate these principles into action.[56] It seems to me the early school practised moral indoctrination rather than moral education. The teacher was expected to educate the children morally by precept and example rather than as a part of a planned moral development program. R.S. Peters say that "the paradox of moral education is that each person must enter the palace of reason through the courtyard of habit and tradition."[57] The schools in the early years of the century concentrated on entering the courtyard of habit and tradition. I would suggest they never made it through to the palace of reason.

Which leaves us with two (at least two) questions:

1. Why did the school concentrate on habit and tradition and
2. Why did the emphasis change as the years progressed?

Perhaps the strong influence for moral education in the early schools was a direct result of one man - David J. Goggin, Superintendent of Schools in the North West Territories. Goggin took over the direction of the system when the dual, church - controlled schools were replaced by public schools. The natural moral base of the religious schools, and the tendency of the dominant churches (Anglican and Roman Catholic) to teach by authority, was continued and strengthened by Goggin. Both Saskatchewan and Alberta only retained this strong moral bias until their first curricula revisions.

In other words the impetus for morals and values as part of the schools' curricula came from its beginnings which were religiously based, and from its first superintendent, who single-handedly put the school system together. Once the religious base was eroded and the influence of Goggin a distant memory, the prominence given to this side of the curriculum declined. Lip service has continued to be given to ethical and moral - purposes or aims. However these aims have not been backed up by curricula guides, by time-tabling, by teacher education, or by any rationale which goes beyond the need for inculcating habit and character.

I would like to suggest some reasons why the school has retained a moral or ethical goal without developing a planned moral education program.

First, the long association of morals and value training with religion and the long association of education and the church has meant that the public school has found it difficult to define moral education outside of a particular dogmatic religion.

Second, despite this association, the school felt an ethical goal was necessary to give the public school (or godless school in the eyes of some people) a legitimacy - it was educating the whole child.

Third, the society put additional pressures on the school - for vocational training, for health care, for social development - which were tangible, measurable, of obvious benefit to the individual and society. There was only so much time in the school day.

Fourth, perhaps a change occured in the society itself, a change which put materialistic values and increasing creature gratification ahead of ethical matters.

Fifth, the development of a planned moral education program and the possibility of the effective use of such a program in the schools was dampened by the knowledge of the severe shortage of teachers and the fact that so many teachers were undereducated, young and inexperienced.

In conclusion, we've always had moral or ethical education as a goal of the school. It seems to me that we've never provided the means for this goal to be accomplished. The result has been a hit and miss affair of character training by example and perhaps force - with no basis in reason. The early school appeared to have a degree of moral emphasis which has consistently decreased as the century grew older. A more detailed look at the school and the society in the area of values may help to tell us why.

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